

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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D - MR. LAMB

-----132102Z 110471 /70
O 132012Z MAY 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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BRASILIA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC BL

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA: THE ACTING
SECRETARY'S MEETING MAY 13 WITH PRISONERS' RELATIVES

1. THE ACTING SECRETARY MET WITH FIVE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE GROUP OF RELATIVES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AT
10 A.M. TODAY. A CALM AND ORDERLY PRESENTATION WAS MADE
BY THE FIVE FAMILY REPRESENTATIVES. THE ACTING
SECRETARY CAREFULLY HEARD THEM OUT, EXPRESSED HIS DEEP
CONCERN FOR THE PRISONERS' PLIGHT; AND PLEDGED TO TAKE
TWO ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING. FIRST, THE
ACTING SECRETARY SAID THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY TELEPHONE
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN IN BRASILIA TODAY TO TELL OF HIS
MEETING WITH THE PARENTS, AND TO URGE TODMAN TO MAKE A
STRONG APPEAL FOR EXPEDITING BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT ACTION
ON THE PRISONERS' CASES DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT WITH
PRESIDENT BANZER AND OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
SECONDLY, THE ACTING SECRETARY ALSO INSTRUCTED ARA TO
TELEPHONE AMBASSADOR STEDMAN TO EXPRESS THE ACTING

SECRETARY'S GREAT CONCERN OVER THE REPORTED SUICIDE THREAT OF DANNY GOLDMAN (AS EMBASSY AWARE, GOLDMAN HAS WRITTEN HIS BROTHER IN US TO SAY THAT HE SEES NO WAY OUT AND PLANS TO COMMIT SUICIDE ON MAY 14). REGARDING THIS

CASE, EMBASSY LA PAZ IS HERewith INSTRUCTED TO PRESS FOR IMMEDIATE ADMISSION OF GOLDMAN TO SUITABLE PSYCHIATRIC OR OTHER CLINIC AS HAS BEEN DISCUSSED LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, OR TAKE OTHER SUITABLE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT GOLDMAN IN HIS CURRENT DESPONDENT STATE DOES NOT CARRY OUT SUICIDE THREAT. (THIS SAME INSTRUCTION HAS BEEN TELEPHONED TO EMBASSY LA PAZ.)

2. THE ACTING SECRETARY CAREFULLY HEARD OUT FIVE RELATIVES' DESCRIPTIONS OF PRISONERS' SITUATION. DR. FARMER, TOWARD END OF DISCUSSION, REPEATED GROUP'S DEMANDS (SEE STATE 106168). FARMER SAID GROUP NOW INSISTS THAT EVEN MORE RIGID DEADLINES SHOULD BE OBTAINED: GOLDMAN SHOULD BE RELEASED INTO CUSTODY OF A CLINIC WITH PROPER MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES TODAY ("WE DO NOT WANT HIS BLOOD ON OUR HANDS"); ALL OF THE OTHER PRISONERS SHOULD BE RELEASED BY NEXT TUESDAY; CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT; AND AMBASSADOR STEDMAN SHOULD BE RECALLED IN MATTER OF DAYS (SIC).

3. IN RESPONSE TO FARMER, THE ACTING SECRETARY PLEDGED HIS "RENEWED AND PERSONAL INTEREST" AND SAID WE WOULD "DOUBLE AND REDOUBLE" OUR EFFORTS IN TRYING IN COMING DAYS TO WORK OUT SOLUTIONS FOR THE PRISONERS' SITUATION. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE SAID THAT NO MIRACLES CAN BE EXPECTED, BUT THAT DEPARTMENT WOULD BE AS "DETERMINED AND RESPONSIVE AS WE CAN BE". HE SAID THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH ANOTHER SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT, ONE WHICH HAS AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM, AND THERE OBVIOUSLY ARE LIMITS AS TO HOW MUCH INFLUENCE WE CAN BRING TO BEAR IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID THAT GROUP WAS UNFAIR IN APPRAISING EFFORTS OF AMBASSADOR STEDMAN AND HIS STAFF IN HANDLING PRISONERS' CASES, AND EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT AMBASSADOR STEDMAN, TOGETHER WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN, WILL PRESS FOR PROMPT ACTION BY GOB TO SOLVE PRISONERS' PROBLEMS.

4. ACTING SECRETARY ALSO DISCUSSED HIS CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS. HE SAID HE CONSTRUED THESE RIGHTS TO INCLUDE RIGHT TO SPEEDY TRIAL AND DUE PROCESS AND AVOIDANCE OF ANY "PHYSICAL INTRUSION." HE REMINDED GROUP THAT EACH COUNTRY HAS DIFFERENT NARCOTICS LAWS, AND THAT SOME, INCLUDING SOME STATE LAWS

IN OUR COUNTRY, CAN BE "UNFAIR AND CAPRICIOUS" (E.G.
EXTREMELY LONG SENTENCES FOR NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS).

IN ANY EVENT, THE ACTING SECRETARY SAID THAT DEPARTMENT
WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO ENSURE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS
OF THE AMERICAN PRISONERS, IN BOLIVIA AS ELSEWHERE,
WOULD BE PROTECTED. CHRISTOPHER

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